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AUTHOR	Parker, Glenn C.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Two separate, complementary high school programs--one in humanities, the other in communicative arts--designed to improve both the general knowledge and the specific language skills of students are offered in Beachwood, Ohio. The knowledge-oriented program in the humanities encourages intellectual dissent and provides an amalgam of history, literature, sociology, philosophy, political science, natural science, economics, and the arts, while focusing on the study of man through the ages. This program explores the general history of what has happened to mankind politically, sociologically, and artistically (grade 9); America from colonization to today (grade 10); particular institutions and beliefs from antiquity to the present (grade 11); and contemporary affairs (grade 12). The skill-oriented program in the communicative arts requires proficiency to satisfy requirements and places the student at his particular level of competency in reading, word study, writing, and speech, offering him more than 40 courses from remedial reading and spelling to advanced semantics and research problems. (Included are a list of all course offerings in communicative arts; the design of the 8 units in freshman humanities; and the text of an interview with three of the administrators on the goals and implementation of the two programs.) (JB)

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How to start a HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES program

by Glenn C. Parker, Superintendent, Robert F. Dober, Humanities Coordinator, and Arthur Shapiro, High School Principal

Something new is afoot in high school curriculum. It's called humanities —the study of man—and it makes today's English and history courses as obsolete as the one-room schoolhouse. One of the first such programs has been started in Beachwood, Ohio.

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■ ■ ■ Conflict. Contradiction. Criticism.

These are the "three C's" in Beechwood, Ohio, the rocks upon which a dynamic new high school program in the humanities is based.

They embody an educational philosophy bent on dissension and intellectual freedom that would leave most teachers and administrators pale, trembling and breathless.

Imagine:

- Three teachers arguing heatedly over the meaning of the First Book of Genesis on the opening day of school before 120 sophomore students.
- A sophomore perched on a stool at the front of a classroom, criticizing each and every comment put forward by student and teacher alike.
- One teacher loudly disagreeing with another's views on economic cycles in front of a class.
- A student telling a teacher he knows all there is to know in a composition course, taking a test to prove it, and being taken out of the course and assigned more advanced work.
- A teenager lecturing for half a class period on Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and defending his views against the criticism of fellow students for the final half of the period.

Conjure up all of these images and, believe it or not, you'll see a true picture of what really happens in Beechwood's high school humanities and communicative arts program. Intellectual discord in the classroom does not mean disaster, goes the Beechwood credo, it means opportunity—an opportunity for students to learn how to think independently and critically; to fully realize their own individual potentials; to discover the spirit of man, the wealth of his accomplishments, the depth of his failures and the meaning of his system of values.

In short, it means an opportunity for *true* learning.

A departure

The Beachwood humanities program breaks sharply not only with traditional methods of teaching history and English, but with conventional course content as well. It's an amalgam of history, literature, sociology, philosophy, political science, natural science, economics and the arts. It focuses not on political history, isolated dates and forgotten places, but on *people* through the ages—their

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ambitions, their ideals, their aspirations for better ways of living. It treats literature, art and ideas not as antiques plucked from a curiously primitive past, but as enlightening clues to the societies and eras in which they flourished.

But this is only part of the "new look." With literature transferred from English to the humanities, Beachwood schoolmen had to find a place for what many consider to be the nub of English instruction—writing and grammar. So, they created a second, separate program devoted not only to composition, but to *all* language skills. Highly individualized, this—the communicative arts program—is designed to provide each student with the particular types of instruction he needs. Over 40 courses are available to students, ranging from basic spelling and speech to semantics and poetry writing (*see table below*).

"With these two programs," says Superintendent Glenn C. Parker, "we're recognizing the natural division that has always existed between knowledge, per se, and *skills*. The failure of educators to recognize this division in the past is a major reason why these subjects have been taught so poorly for so long."

How they work

While these two programs certainly complement each other, they differ greatly and are taught separately. In humanities, team teaching demands flexibility in scheduling, student grouping and subject matter selection; in communicative arts, the conventional teaching situation—one teacher, one class, set class periods and one subject—holds sway. In humanities, all students take essentially the same subjects; in communicative arts, students take different subjects, depending on their needs. In humanities, students are exposed to a variety of subjects during a year, progressing naturally as a group from one to another; in communicative arts, a student must remain in a course until he can demonstrate proficiency in it. In humanities, the emphasis is on thinking; in communicative arts, it is on doing.

In the ninth-grade humanities program, for example, eight hours of class time are scheduled week-

THE SCOPE OF COMMUNICATIVE ARTS

This is the communicative arts program—all of it. While ungraded, this counterpart of the humanities program is designed to carry through all four years of high school. Based on pre-testing, it is tailored to meet the diverse needs of all students. Students must first prove their proficiency in fundamentals and competence courses before progressing to advanced and talent units. This system of advancement based on achievement insures that each pupil will truly realize his own potential and that each student will get a real grounding in the basic tools of communication.

Experiences	100-Fundamentals	200-Competence	300-Advanced	400-Talent
Reading	101 Reading 140 Research skills	205 How to study	350 Reading for comprehension 351 Reading of connotative material 352 Reading for point of view	470 Critical reading 471 Analysis of elements from written works 472 Analysis of relationships
Word Study	130 Vocabulary building	240 Origin of English 250 Phonetics	340 Methods of thought	450 Semantics 470 Logic
Writing	110 Spelling 120 Grammar and punctuation 121 Effective sentences 122 Paragraph development	200 Introductory composition 210 Narrative writing 221 Mechanics of a research paper 222 Research paper laboratory 230 Specific forms of composition	300 Composition 310 The plotted narrative 330 Newswriting 390 Verse writing	400 Advanced composition 410 Writing the short story 420 Individual research 440 Personal essay 490 Poetry writing
Speech		260 Beginning speech 261 Public speaking	360 Persuasion 370 Drama workshop 380 Discussion 320 Parliamentary procedures	430 Interpretative reading 480 Debate

ly. The basic class of 120 students usually—but not always—attends lectures three hours a week. This group breaks down homogeneously into four sections of 30 students or eight sections of 15 students for the remaining class periods. Large group meetings cover the broad picture while these smaller groups attack specific aspects of that picture.

"This set-up gives us tremendous latitude and flexibility in our course work," says Parker. "The amount and type of class time varies from week to week, as does student grouping. We're never confined to a set schedule or routine. If we need fewer lectures and more intensive small-group work, we arrange things accordingly. If we don't need all the class time scheduled, students are automatically assigned to independent study. We can do whatever we *want* to do."

The humanities program is graded normally, nine-12. Communicative arts is not. At the beginning of the ninth year, all students take pretests to pinpoint their language skill abilities and weaknesses. They're assigned to courses on the basis of the results. If a student shows proficiency in all of the fundamentals, he bypasses basic courses and takes something more advanced. Each class meets twice a week for a minimum of six weeks. Those who pass a test at the end of a unit progress to more advanced work; those who fail stay until they can pass. If a student appears to have gotten all that he can out of a course before six weeks have passed, he is pulled out and given suitable work. (This is rare, however, as pre-testing places students accurately.)

Each of the four teachers in this course (the number of teachers will increase as the number of students enrolled increases) handles four or five courses each six weeks. Each is an expert in English *usage*. Student groups change continually and class sizes vary from seven or eight to 20 or 25. Grouping is fairly homogeneous,

A SLICE OF HUMANITIES

PERIOD: RISE OF CIVILIZATION/INTRODUCTION, UNIT I

Historical Perspective	Philosophy	Literature
Genesis What is history? What is civilization? Original civilizations Sumer, Egypt, Indus Valley, Maya, Inca Secondary civilizations Fertile Crescent, Syria, Babylonia, Hebrew, Minoan, Mycenae, Crete, Persia	Gilgamesh Epic, 2000 B.C. Amos, 750 B.C. Zoroaster, 660-583 B.C. Confucius, c. 500 B.C.	William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* Homer, *Iliad* Homer, *Odessey*

PERIOD: HELLENISTIC/UNIT II, GREECE

Greek contributions to the world and to western heritage specifically Element of government in Greece Greece and foreign affairs Greek accomplishments Alexander's empire and the fusion of East and West Combination of the Hellenic and the Oriental becomes Hellenistic civilization Breakup of the Empire as Greek civil war leads to decline	Plato, dialogues: *Apology, Crito, Republic, Phaedo* Aristotle: *Nichomachean, Ethics, Poetics* Stoicism: Zeno Epicurean: Epicurus, Lucretius Skepticism General review of Greek philosophy	Herodotus, 525-484 B.C. Thucydides, 470-398 B.C. Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* Aristophanes, *The Clouds* Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* Menander, comedy Theophrastus, *Characters*

PERIOD: ROMANS/UNIT III

The growth and development of Rome and its contribution to Western civilization Roman achievements The Roman Republic The Roman Empire The division of the Empire into East and West Population Movements Barbarian Invansions: a topical approach The rise and spread of Christianity	Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* Cicero, *De. Republica* Seneca, *Ethical Translations* Marcus Aurelius Longinus, *On the Sublime*	Plautus Terence Virgil, *Aeneid, Ecologues* Horace, *Satires* Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Seneca Marcus Aurelius Plutarch, *Lives* Polybius Livy Tacitus, *Agricola De Germania* Livius Catullus Juvenal Lucan, *Pharsalia*

This is Beachwood High School's humanities program, not for four years, but for one—the freshman year. It's designed to provide beginning students with a wide and sturdy foundation in world history and culture. Although the primary emphasis here is on quantity, quality is not neglected since a number of topics are examined in considerable depth. "This is a vital year as a starting point," says Superintendent Parker, "but the material is really not the most important element. The real goal is to encourage the students to learn how to think. This is where we first sow the seeds of discontent that will blossom into the questioning minds we're trying to produce. We hope to raise questions in each student's mind."

Art and Music	Economics	Political Science	Science	Religion	Miscellaneous
Pre-historic cave painting, carving Egyptian pyramids, statues **Music** Primitive music	Ecology: relation of man to the environment Early development of trade, agriculture	Social class structure Origins of government Hammurabi Laws	Origin of the earth Origins of man: anthropological approach	Origin and early development of religion (The relationship of primitive instincts in man, as seen in *Lord of the Flies*, to the higher motivations seen in Genesis)	Primitive societies existing today
Archaic: sculpture, temples 1st Classical period: Parthenon, Erectheum 2nd Classical period: sculpture Hellenistic art: Laocoon, Aphrodite of Melos **Music** Greek chorus in drama	The concept of the city-state Greek colonization and its implications Further development of commerce and trade	Age of tyrants Athenian democracy Spartan militarism Solon Aristotle, *Politics* Efforts under the Empire to unify the world.	Developments in science and math Aristotle, *Biology* Euclid, Archimedes, Protagorus, Hero, Hippocrates, Aristarchus	Development of religion in Greece Olympian gods City-state dieties Mystery cults	Psychological implications of *Oedipus Rex* Psychology: Theophrastus
Sculpture Architecture: Pantheon, Forums, Colosseum, Baths of Caracalla, Arch of Constantine	Comparison with Greek economics Economic reforms of Caesar	Early government of of Rome The Republic The Empire How Rome succeeded where Greece failed	Galen Ptolemy Pliny	Adoption of the Greek religion Jesus Christ	

but it's determined by achievement, not intelligence.

"The brightest student in school could find himself in the slowest class if he didn't apply himself," says Parker. "We want each student to go as far as he can toward developing his talents and skills. Since we have no letter or numerical grades here, a student's achievement is measured by how far he goes and by the difficulty of his courses. Usually, a bright child will go further than an average child, but he'll have to work a lot harder to get there."

Thus the Beachwood humanities-communicative arts program splits the conventional English-history curriculum asunder with a sharp, two-pronged attack that ranges wider, delves deeper and aims higher than most schoolmen would dare to imagine.

To find out exactly what this new program is—the thinking behind it and how it was started—SCHOOL MANAGEMENT editors recently went to Beachwood. There, the following question-and-answer article was recorded during an interview with Superintendent Parker and two of his assistants: high school principal Arthur Shapiro and Robert F. Dober, humanities coordinator.

Q. You're going to a lot of trouble to re-cast the traditional English and history curriculum. Why?

PARKER: Because everything about the traditional approach to these subjects is wrong. Learning is fragmented. Primary concern is with minutiae. In English, literature is snatched out of its historical context, abridged and anthologized, and spoon fed to students in small daily doses like medicine. Grammar and composition are given to all students in nearly equal amounts, regardless of individual needs. In history, the past is treated like a long, tiresome poem that all students must memorize. Seldom is there room in history or English courses for the feeling and color of an age, the personality of great men, or the day-to-day preoccupations of average people. Instead, everything is pickled in labeled jars for inspection year after year after year.

DOBER: This is bad enough, but

PERIOD: MIDDLE AGES/UNIT IV

Historical Perspective	Philosophy	Literature
Byzantium: the Roman Empire in the East The beginning of Feudalism as a way of life Society in feudal times: towns, trade, and culture Decline of Byzantium and the rise of Islam The Crusades	St. Augustine, *Confessions* Scholasticism Thomas Aquinus Duns Scotus Mohammed	*Beowulf* Caedmon, *Genesis* Boccaccio, *Ballads* Petrarch Langland, *Piers the Plowman* Chaucer Malory, *Morte d'Arthur* Joinville Dante, *Inferno*

PERIOD: RENNAISSANCE TO 1599/UNIT V

The Renaissance in Italy and Northern Europe Economic and political change Renaissance thought and the Renaissance Man The Renaissance as expressed in art, literature, and science	Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Divinity of Man* Bacon Montaigne, *Essays* Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*	Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* Sidney Lyley Marlowe, *Faustus* Development of the drama from Medieval times through Shakespeare *Macbeth, The Wakefield Noah, The Chester Deluge, Noah, Everyman, Gorboduc, Don Quixote*

PERIOD: REFORMATION/UNIT VI

A review of Church history from 800 to 1648 as a basis for understanding the Protestant and Catholic Reformations	Religious Philosophy Review from early religions through Luther and Calvin, with observations on present day religious philosophy	Swift, *Tale of the Tub*

PERIOD: RISE OF NATIONAL STATES/UNIT VII

The rise of National States in England, France, Spain, Russia, Prussia, Austria Breakup of the Holy Roman Empire and Turkey. The Age of Discovery, including settlements and early American colonial history to 1700	Bacon Cervantes *The Folly of Vasco Da Gamma*	17th century English poetry Ben Jonson John Donne Milton, *Paradise Lost, Samson Agonistes* James I Cavalier Poets Excerpts from Shakespeare's chronicle plays Molière La Rochefoucauld

PERIOD: AGE OF REASON/UNIT VIII

The Period of Enlightenment in Europe Law and natural rights Enlightened despotism European influence on American social and intellectual history of the 18th century The move toward democracy as seen in the French Revolution. The American Revolution as contrasted with contemporary revolutions such as Cuba, Latin America, and Africa. Napoleon Bonaparte as Dictator and Emperor. The results of the French Revolution, through the Congress of Vienna, 1815	Hobbes, *The Leviathan* Voltaire, *Candide* Rousseau, *The Social Contract* Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Pascal, Montesquieu, Montaigne, Kant, Hume, Hegel	Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* Pope, Franklin, Sam Johnson, Addison and Steele, Diarists, Burns, Blake, Cowper, Gray Romantics: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Pushkin, Hugo, Goethe, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Dumas, J. Austen, Scott

Art and Music	Economics	Political Science	Science	Religion	Miscellaneous
Early Christian art, church architecture Byzantine, mosaics Romanesque Gothic, stained glass, sculpture Italian 13th, 14th century painting: Giotto **Music** Folk music and dances Gregorian chants Medieval music	Feudalism Guilds and towns Trade New trade routes	Political structure of feudalism and its implications	Ibn Sima (Avicenna) *The Canon*	Mythology, Paganism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, (to be dealt with from a topical approach)	Education: the university Monastic thought
Italian Renaissance: Da Vinci, Botticelli, Cellini, Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian Review of Art from early ages through Renaissance **Music** Palestrina, Ars Nova	Rise and development of capitalism De Medici, Jacob Fugger	Machiavelli, *The Prince* Grotius, *Laws of War and Peace* Beginnings of autocracy	Galileo, Copernicus, Vesalius, Kepler, Harvey, Tornicelli, Boyle	Witchcraft Humanism	
Durer Crenach **Music** Baroque opera	Economic causes of the Reformation and the results, including the impetus to capitalism	More, *Utopia*	Leeuwenhoek Hooke	Waldo, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Calvin Anglicanism, England	
Baroque: Rubens, Rembrandt Palace of Versailles Rococo **Music** Baroque opera	Mercantilism Celbert Colonization	Absolute monarchies Tudors Louis XIV	Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* Newton	Development of established churches	Walton, *Compleat Angler*
Neo classical art: David Goya Romanticism: Delacroix, Constable **Music** Bach, Handel, Haydn, Gluck, Mozart Topical development of music Beethoven Schubert	Physiocrats Laissez-faire: Adam Smith Malthus Social class structure and its economic manifestations	Rise of Parliament Law: British Revolution Theories: Montesquieu, Rousseau Absolute Monarchy 1st French Republic Napoleon and the Empire, Congress of Vienna Metternich Castlereagh Talleyrand Alexander I	Roger Bacon, Paracelsus General review of science including Arabic astronomy and other early scientists and mathematicians Lavoisier, Jenner, Rumford	Methodism Unitarianism Deism	

the greatest fault in conventional teaching of English and history is the failure to recognize that knowledge—all knowledge—is indivisible. History and literature, along with art, philosophy and economics, are inseparable. You can't understand one without understanding the other. Unless you're familiar with the age of Swift, "Gulliver's Travels" reads like a fairy tale, which it is not. Unless you're familiar with European history, the paintings of Bosch look like psychopathic cartoons. Unless you've read "The Prince" or "Henry IV," you can have no real concept of the Renaissance concept of monarchy. The traditional methods of teaching English and history commit the unpardonable sin of arbitrarily splintering knowledge for the sake of convenience. Under these circumstances, the true reasons for studying English and history have disappeared.

Q. What should be the objectives of these courses?

PARKER: The most important reason for teaching history and literature is to teach students how to think, to instill in them inquiring minds and intellectual honesty, to give them the ability to express themselves clearly. By studying man's past, his institutions, his artistic and scientific achivements, and his philosophies, students should begin to understand that there *is* a direction in life. There *is* a reason for being. There *is* a system of values and there are good reasons why it exists. If the great traditions of our society are to continue, *all* of our young people—not just the top 10% of the class—must understand them, appreciate them and, if necessary, be capable of changing them. The way English and history are being taught today, students simply are not equipped to carry this burden.

Q. What are you doing to equip them properly?

PARKER: We've taken the fragments of traditional English-history curriculum, added some subjects that never were included, like music, art and science, and fused them into a comprehensive whole. This is our humanities program. Originally, it was designed as a sequential, three-year program, beginning in the 10th grade. However, the teachers decided to expand it into a four-year course —not because we bit off more than we could chew, but because we want to go into *more* material in greater depth.

The first year of the program, ninth grade, is an introduction to humanities which gives the students a firm basis for the next three years. We give them a thorough grounding in world geography and in basic terms and concepts of man's institutions during the first semester. The second half of the year is concerned largely with history. While the approach is chronological, the concepts of man's behavior developed in the first semester are emphasized, primarily through reading great literature. All in all, the students acquire an excellent overall picture of what's happened to mankind since the beginning: politically, sociologically and artistically.

DOBER: The sophomore year is a humanities study of American culture, from colonization to today. Again the approach is chronological and again the emphasis is on the development of institutions and ideas. A wide range of material is covered, from Puritanism to the A-bomb, and literature is again the prime key to this material. But the real crux of this program comes in 11th grade. The basis of instruction then becomes purely topical. We'll trace certain institutions and beliefs from antiquity to the present. Some topics will be required of all students, but there will be electives and selected grouping in others. This will allow the students to examine subjects like religion, economics, ethics and art in great depth. This is where we'll begin to give the students free rein over their own thoughts and drives and interests. If we succeed in whetting their appetite for this material in the first two years, this is where it will pay off.

SHAPIRO: That's true, but I think we can expect just as much of them in the senior year. This part of the program—now taking shape —will focus entirely on contemporary affairs. It will be conducted on a seminar basis, with the students choosing topics that interest them. They'll be in small groups in which they'll exchange views, participate in joint projects, debate and examine the issues and problems that beset mankind in this century. Thus, at the end of four years, the students will have had a dynamic, integrated liberal arts experience.

Q. Complete "new" science and "new" math curriculums can be bought from the study groups that

Lively sessions in the humanities are achieved through frequent play readings, dialogues and, here, debates staged by the teachers.

have developed them. Where do you get a humanities program?

PARKER: You can't buy one anywhere, and for a very simple reason: there aren't any for sale. When I first began thinking seriously about a new approach to history and English, this was one of the first discoveries I made. We had to start from scratch and write our own program. As far as I'm concerned, that's the *only* way to do it. It's a tremendously difficult job, but the knowledge that you gain from the experience is well worth it.

DOBER: Also, since our teachers wrote the program, it was tailor-made for them. If another district's teachers had written it, it would have turned out differently, suited to their specifications. This is another important reason for writing your own program.

Q. Suppose half your teachers leave next year—will the whole program have to be rewritten?

SHAPIRO: Maybe. But it's more likely that only parts of it will have to be rewritten. This is no drawback, since it's being constantly revised anyway. One of the big faults in conventional English-history curriculum is its rigidity. We're making sure that change is an integral part of the new program. After all, it's based primarily on the ideas our teachers have about these subjects and how they can best teach them. Chances are that, four years from now, it will be entirely different than it is today. That's fine. That's the way we want it.

Q. When was the program written?

PARKER: The original first year of the program, the sophomore year, was developed during a six-week summer period. Previously, I'd gone to the board and expressed my dissatisfaction with the English-history set-up. I explained the goals I had set for a new program, indicated the general form it might take and asked for permission to go ahead and develop it. I also requested around $5,000 to pay the teachers who would write it. The board consented and that summer the whole thing was born.

Q. How did you select teachers to work on it?

PARKER: I wanted everyone who would be teaching in the program to work on it. I thought nine teachers would be needed altogether. Our district was expanding rapidly, so I had to hire some English and history teachers anyway. As it turned out, five veteran teachers volunteered to come into the program and I hired the remainder, primarily on the basis of their interest in it.

Q. What were some of the problems encountered in developing the program?

DOBER: Actually, there were two big problems that broke down into a lot of little ones. The first was defining the limits of the material to be included in the first year. All we had to start with were the goals Mr. Parker had verbalized for us and a great body of knowledge—all of man's works and deeds. We had to find an overall organization for the material. We had to settle on what should be emphasized and what should be surveyed and what should be omitted. There were problems of grouping, scheduling, testing and grading, and selection of materials. We had to agree on how we were going to teach these courses and what we expected of the students. It was an almost impossible task. To succeed, everybody had to demonstrate what we were trying to encourage in students—an open mind. It was a summer of compromises.

The second problem was one we all experienced. We had to forget everything that we had learned about teaching literature and history and completely reorient our concepts. This took a great amount of study and effort on our part, but it was worth it. Frankly, I don't see how any teacher could make this orientation *without* working on the program the way we did. The program is simply too new for a teacher to blithely make the switchover between semesters.

Q. Was six weeks enough time?

SHAPIRO: No, and I think everybody agrees that *six months* wouldn't have been enough time. When a district elects to develop such a program, it will inevitably butt up against this problem. The teachers weren't able to finish writing the sophomore program, but the basic aims were accomplished. The course was completely outlined for the first year. The objectives were clearly defined. The first eight weeks were written and the remainder could be developed during the school year. Also, the

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mechanics of teaching, grouping, scheduling and grading were also largely resolved.

DOBER: We developed the program as a definite part of our curriculum. There was never any doubt about its validity, as far as we were concerned. However, if we didn't regard it as an experiment, we were forced to treat it as such once it got underway. We found that changes—adjustments in scheduling, grouping and subject matter—had to be made. Luckily, the fact that the program was *not* finished gave us a surprise element of flexibility that we needed badly. It would be a serious mistake to write and organize the whole thing, from beginning to end, with everything locked in a rigid master plan.

PARKER: Last year and this year, we've been dismissing school one hour early every Monday for a two-hour in-service training program. This is where the remainder of the program's first year was completed. And it's where some really deep thinking and soul searching about the program has been done. I think the sense of direction that our program has stems largely from this workshop. It gives teachers a chance to talk about where they want to take the program, how parts of it can be improved, what kind of youngsters they want to produce. There's a lot of give and take at the sessions and I believe they're a major factor in the program's success.

Q. Once developed, how was the humanities course implemented?

DOBER: On the first day of school last year, the sophomore class walked into the lecture room and saw three teachers arguing over the meaning of the First Book of Genesis. And that's how the program began. Some of those youngsters were so surprised they almost fell out of their seats. We feel there's no point in trying to ease something so completely new and different into a program. It can't be done. If you're going to break with tradition, you must break cleanly.

SHAPIRO: We began the program only in the 10th grade because we knew there would be some kinks to iron out. We could have spent more time in preparation and implemented it simultaneously in all grades, but in so doing we would have cut down considerably on our ability to adjust and change. This way, we had one grade and one part of the curriculum—a kind of microcosm of the course as it now stands—and we were able to observe how it worked and to fashion the remaining three years accordingly. Just as in developing the program, it's important to allow yourself a little leeway in implementing it too.

PARKER: We weren't worried about the students' reaction to the sudden change. No special preparation had been made to ease the shock because we knew they would adapt quickly. It took them just a few weeks to learn what was expected of them—which is a great deal—and to enter into the spirit of things. From then on, the teachers had to race to stay ahead. We *were* somewhat concerned about the parents' reaction, however, and at the beginning of the year we had a large orientation

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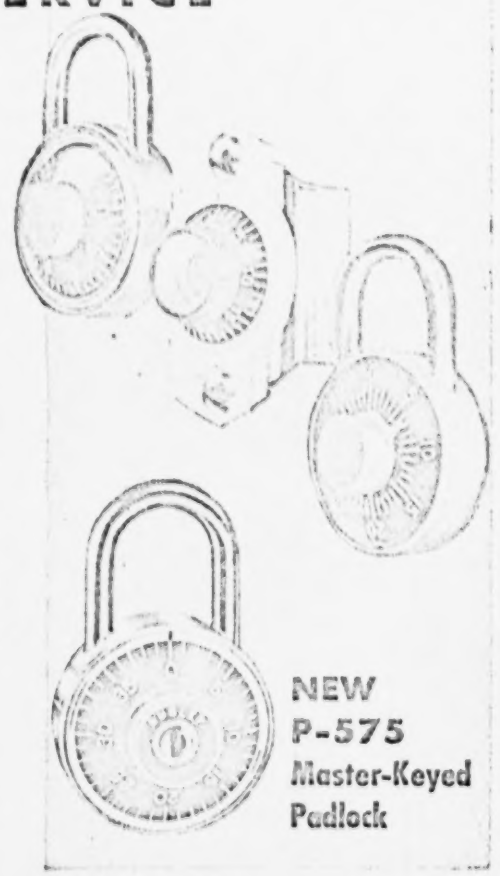

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meeting with them. We explained what the program was all about and what we were trying to accomplish with it. A few were skeptical, but most of them were as enthusiastic and interested as their children.

Q. Getting children enthusiastic is one problem; keeping them that way must be even more difficult. How do you do it?

DOBER: The program itself is a sharp challenge to them. In a sense, we're daring them to tackle this material and to match wits with each other and with us. Most students are responding by getting deeply involved in the course. But challenging course content would not, in itself, be enough to sustain our high pitch all year long. We use other methods of keeping youngsters on their toes, too. We bring in resource people qualified to talk about music, art, science and other subjects. We rotate teachers after every unit, so each teacher has each group twice during the year. We continually provide contradictions for the students to hash out. We want them to disagree, to question, and to look for the truth. And we're careful never to make any student feel he is "wrong."

SHAPIRO: We also keep the students on their toes by using a variety of materials. Certain assignments are made for all pupils for each unit, but there's no basic text. For example, in the first unit this year the ninth graders read "Lord of the Flies," the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." Students are asked in the small sessions to report on magazine articles and books, to draw special maps of historical areas, to organize discussion panels, to create dialogues and give verbal reports. At the end of every unit, each pupil is expected to hand in a paper on some special topic. We think up novel ways to present the material through poetry readings, plays, dialogues; through extensive use of movies, opaque and slide projectors, and recordings. We let students select much of the material they use and we even encourage them to plan some of the course work and conduct some of the classes.

Q. You're going to have to offer a variety of courses every year in communicative arts. Will you have enough teachers—qualified teachers—to handle them?

PARKER: Instruction is something of a problem, but it's far less acute under this set-up than under the traditional program. Many of these courses haven't been taught at all under the old system, and those that were often received inadequate treatment. Now they are all being taught, most of them extremely well. The important thing here is, the students *do* at least have the opportunity to try their wings in these areas.

But the *real* problem here is in maintaining true flexibility in the number and variety of courses we can offer. After all, we have only so many teachers and occasionally we may not be able to handle all of the courses indicated by pre-testing and by the students' progress. Frankly, I don't know if we will or not. We may have to add more teachers, if we can, or bring in resource people for certain courses, or double principals as teachers, or just not offer some courses at all. The important thing

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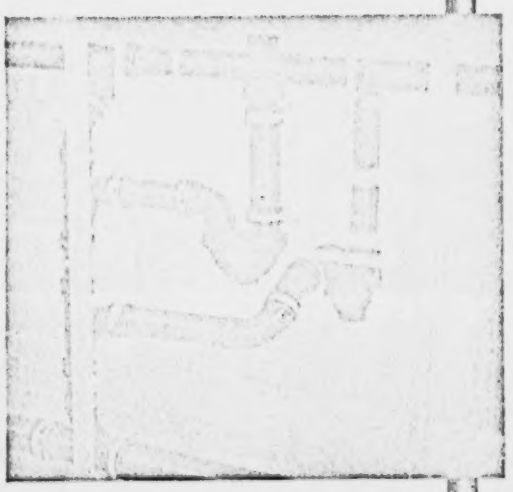

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is, we're now achieving far greater range and flexibility than ever before. You can't hesitate to go into something new like this just because it embodies a few difficulties.

Q. The whole humanities—communicative arts program is now in its second year. Where does it stand?

PARKER: It's blossomed into a three-year program, grades nine-11. This summer, all of the staff members who are teaching in it were again involved in writing workshops. This time we had a definite idea of what subject matter we wanted to cover in each of the three years and how. The problem was simply to get it organized and written.

This year, the introductory year has been moved back to ninth grade. Students who had conventional freshman world history and English courses last year are taking the American culture humanities this year. And the current juniors, who were in the humanities course last year, are also taking the American culture course. In this way, none of the students in grades nine through 11 is missing out on the program and we're maintaining subject matter continuity. The 12th grade course will be written this year and implemented next fall.

Q. What proof do you have, since you're diving headlong into this now, that this program is better than the traditional English-history curriculum?

PARKER: None. Absolutely no proof, if you're talking about objective tests, pre- and post-testing, cross checking and the like. Remember, this isn't something that a child either knows or doesn't know. This is a subjective, albeit extremely thorough, study of that most subjective topic—man. And, let's face it, our goals are subjective too. We're trying to fan a spark of interest in students for their long and rich heritage; to encourage them to appreciate the good things in life; to make them think and question and seek truth. How *would* you test your degree of success in achieving these goals?

All I can say is that we all think what we're doing is far better than what we were doing before. We're experiencing great satisfaction and so are the students. They're reacting enthusiastically and we think we're meeting their needs with both parts of the program—humanities and communicative arts.

Q. Would you say that this program is within the means of any school district?

DOBER: No. I realize you like to tie up your articles neatly with the inference that *any* district can do thus-and-so. But that just isn't the case here. Not every district has administrators who are willing to stick their necks out and gamble on a drastic departure from conventional curriculum. Not every district has teachers who will devote themselves so completely to developing such a program. And, quite frankly, I'm not sure there are many districts with student bodies as hungry for this kind of work as ours.

PARKER: No, this program isn't for any district that fosters the *status quo* and shies away from terribly hard work. And for those school systems that *are* qualified to assume such a burden, I'm fairly certain that their program would differ quite a bit from our own. Ours isn't the only way to organize and conduct such a course, and it may not be the best way. The content and instruction of any program will be determined by the administrators and teachers involved, by their interpretation of the community's needs. Each district will have to cut its own way through this particular wilderness, and the result of their effort will probably be unique. That's the beauty of it all.

In the long run, though, I don't think the important thing to consider is content or instruction or form or anything like that. It's *why* you're doing it and what you want to accomplish that counts. If people in a district feel the need for this kind of program is great enough and if the goals they set are high enough—and too high isn't high enough—then I would say the answer to your questions is a qualified: "Yes, *that* district *can* build such a program." **End**

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